

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAM-01 CIAE-00 PM-04 INR-07 L-03

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USMISSION NATO

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LISBON 6291

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, MASS, PINT, PO

SUBJECT: VISIT TO AIR BASE NO. 3 AND THE REGIMENT OF PARACHUTISTS,
TANCOS, PORTUGAL ON OCTOBER 22, 1975

SUMMARY: CHIEF U.S. MAAG-PORTUGAL ACCCOMPANIED BY CHIEF AIR FORCE SECTION-MAAG VISITED AIR BASE NO. 3 AND THE REGIMENT OF PARACHUTISTS AT KEY MILITARY AREA OF TANCOS ON OCT 22. CHIEF MAAG'S REPORT IS CONSIDERED RELEVANT TO PORTUGAL'S ONGOING POLITICAL/MILITARY PROBLEMS. GENERAL CONCLUSION TO BE DRAWN FROM THIS REPORT IS THAT PARACHUTISTS ARE WELL LED, AND THE PORTUGUESE AIR FORCE REMAINS A MODERATING INFLUENCE WITHIN PORTUGUESE ARMED FORCES. END SUMMARY
CHIEF MAAG'S REPORT FOLLOWS:

1. COL WILL, CHIEF MAAG PORTUGAL AND LT COL THOMAS, CHIEF AIR FORCE SECTION MAAG PORTUGAL COMMENCED THE VISIT BY A CALL ON AIR BASE NO. 3 COMMANDER, COL ARAUJO WHO WELCOMED THE VISITORS AND STATED THAT HE HAD RECEIVED INFORMATION THAT GENERAL ANIBAL JOSE PINHO FREIRE, COMMANDER FIRST AIR REGION WOULD PROBABLY VISIT THE AIR BASE AND
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THEREFORE HE WAS ASKING MAJOR OLIVEIRA, THE COMMANDER OF

MEDIUM TRANSPORT GROUP 301 TO ESCORT THE VISITORS. WE WOULD MEET LATER FOR LUNCHEON. PERSONNEL CONTACTED:

GEN ANIBAL PINHO FREIRE - CMDR 1ST AIR REGION
(MEMBER REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL)

COL LUIS ANTONIO DA SILVA ARAUJO - CMDR BA-3, TANCOS
COL JOSE ALBERTO MOURA CALHEIROS - CMDR PARATROOPER REGIMENT
LT COL GERALDO JOSE LEAL ESTEVENS - DEPUTY CMDR BA-3
MAJ JOAO CARLOS OLIVEIRA - 301ST GROUP CMDR
CAPT FELIX M.P. RAFAEL - CMDR MEDIUM TRANSPORT SQ.

2. DURING THE VISIT TO THE THREE SQUADRONS MAJ OLIVEIRA STATED THAT THE PAF INTENDS TO OPERATE THE DO-2 AIRCRAFT FOR AN ADDITIONAL FIVE OR SIX YEARS WITH REPLACEMENT PROBABLY CESSNA-2. THEY INTEND TO PHASE OUT THE THREE CUBS IMMEDIATELY. HE INDICATED THEY ARE PERFORMING BOTH ORGANIZATIONAL AND INTERMEDIATE MAINTENANCE ON ALL AIRCRAFT EXCEPT THE NORATLAS. THE STATUS AUTHORIZED AND POSSESSED AIRCRAFT WHERE KNOWN AS FOLLOWS

AUTHORIZED POSSESSED

DO-27 RECON ACFT	UNK	12
ALLOUETTE II HELICOPTER	1	1
ALLOUETTE III HELICOPTER	16	16 (2 CONFIGURED W/20MM CANNON)
PA-18 CUBS	3	3
NORATLAS TRANSPORT	10	2
CASA 212 TRANSPORT	12	10 (1 A/C BA-1 SINTRA) (1 A/C BA-4 LAJES)

(MAJ OLIVEIRA STATED REASON FOR SO FEW AIRCRAFT POSSESSED IS A LACK OF PRODUCTION AT PORTUGUESE MAINTENANCE DEPOT -- OFICINAS GERAIS DE MATERIAL AERONAUTICO -- OGMA. WORKERS ARE NOT TURNING OUT AIRCRAFT ON SCHEDULE DUE TO FREQUENT MEETINGS, WORK STOPPAGES AND GENERAL SLOWDOWN. T-37 FLEET AT BA-1 SINTRA IS EXPERIENCING SIMILAR PROBLEMS.)

3. WE ASKED ABOUT PROBLEMS WITH THE CASA 212, MAJ OLIVEIRA INDICATED THEY WERE NOT HAVING ANY SEVERE PROBLEMS. LT COL THOMAS SPECIFICALLY ASKED ABOUT WING CRACK PROBLEMS AND RECEIVED A NEGATIVE REPLY. ALL BUT TWO HELICOPTERS WERE IN THE HANGAR. MAJ OLIVEIRA STATED THAT THE

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HELICOPTER TRAINING HAD BEEN HELD IN ABEYANCE THREE DIFFERENT TIMES SINCE MAR 11, 1975. THERE ARE SOME 35 PILOTS IN THE SQUADRON WITH 22 MORE IN TRAINING. SINCE RETURN FROM AFRICA, THE NEED FOR ADDITIONAL HELICOPTER PILOTS HAS DECREASED AND THE 22 TRAINEES ARE PRESENTLY NOT RECEIVING INSTRUCTION. COL WILL REMARKED THAT IT CAN BE A SERIOUS MORALE PROBLEM TO HAVE MORE PERSONNEL THAN REQUIRED, MAJ OLIVEIRA HEARTILY AGREED.

4. WHILE TOURING THE BASE MAJ OLIVEIRA COMMENTED THAT THEY HAD 700 RECRUITS IN TRAINING. THE RECRUITS COULD BE IDENTIFIED BY THEIR SHORT HAIR. (THE RECRUITS BROUGHT THEIR SHORT HAIR IN WITH THEM; IT IS NOT CUT AS PART OF IN-PROCESSING.) THEY (RECRUITS) LEARN TO GROW HAIR WHILE HERE (READ BECOME POLITICIZED). MAJ OLIVEIRA FURTHER STATED THAT EVERYONE IN THE PAF KNOWS THAT THEY MUST REDUCE IN SIZE AND THAT HE BELIEVES THAT THE PAF WILL STOP BRINGING IN RECRUITS. HE FURTHER STATED THAT THE OFFICERS DID NOT WANT (SOME REFUSED) TO BE RELEASED FROM SERVICE BECAUSE THEY IN MOST CASES HAVE NO JOBS OUTSIDE THE PAF.

5. AT THE OFFICERS CLUB COL WILL AND LT COL THOMAS JOINED GEN PINHO FREIRE AND COL ARAUJO FOR LUNCH ALONG WITH COL CALHEIROS AND MAJ OLIVEIRA. THE LUNCHEON CONVERSATION WAS FRIENDLY AND CONGENIAL. LT COL THOMAS COMMENTED TO GEN FREIRE THAT WE HAD NOT SEEN HIM FOR SOMETIME, AND HE REPLIED THAT HE DID NOT CARE TO BE SEEN MUCH AS HE WAS VERY BUSY WITH MEETINGS. LT COL THOMAS STATED THAT IT MUST BE NICE TO GET OUT OF LISBON ONCE IN A WHILE TO SEE HOW THINGS ARE ON THE BASES. THE GENERAL STATED THAT HE WAS NOT VISITING THE BASES, HE WAS VISITING "OLD FRIENDS". GEN FREIRE WAS IN CIVILIAN CLOTHES, WHICH SUGGESTS THAT HIS VISIT WAS NOT A MILITARY VISIT BUT RELATED TO CURRENT POLITICAL ACTIVITIES.

6. AFTER LUNCH, WHILE HAVING COFFEE, GEN FREIRE AND THE PORTUGUESE OFFICERS LAUNCHED INTO AN INTENSE POLITICAL DISCUSSION. AT CONCLUSION MAJ OLIVEIRA ASKED LT COL THOMAS IF ALL WAS UNDERSTOOD, LT COL THOMAS INDICATED HE UNDERSTOOD MOST OF IT, AND THEN IN ENGLISH, MAJ OLIVEIRA STATED

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THAT THE PORTUGUESE MILITARY ARE TIRED OF PLAYING POLITICS,
AND WANT TO GET ON WITH THE BUSINESS OF RUNNING THE MILITARY.
HE STATED THAT IF THE VI GOVERNMENT FALLS UNDER COMMUNIST
PRESSURE, AND COMMUNIST CONTROL IS OBTAINED, "WAIT ONE MONTH
AND THERE WILL BE CIVIL WAR". HE WENT ON TO FURTHER STATE.
THAT THE BIG PROBLEM WITH CIVIL WAR IS IDENTIFYING THE ENEMY.

7. COL WILL REMARKED THAT RADIO RENASCENCA WAS OCCUPIED
BY RADICAL LEFTISTS AND ON THE AIR. GEN FREIRE RESPONDED
"WE" HAVE ONE SET OF CRYSTALS AND WE KNEW THAT TWO SETS
EXISTED, IF THEY ARE BROADCASTING WE NOW KNOW WHERE THE
OTHER SET OF CRYSTALS IS AND WE CAN GET THEM ALSO. GEN
FREIRE ALSO SAID IN ASIDES TO COL WILL, "YOU MUST HAVE
PATIENCE; SOME PEOPLE THINK WITH THEIR STOMACHS AND
MUST BE HUNGRY BEFORE THEY UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEM". GEN
FREIRE FURTHER STATED: "WE (AIR FORCE) WANT THE PEOPLE
TO DECIDE THROUGH ELECTIONS".

8. THE COMMANDER OF THE REGIMENT OF PARACHUTISTS, COL
ALBERTO DE MOURA CALHEIROS JOINED THE AIR BASE 3 GROUP
FOR LUNCHEON. DURING THE AFTER LUNCHEON COFFEE CON-
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VERSATION, COL CALHEIROS WAS RATHER TACITURN AND HAD
VERY LITTLE TO ADD. AFTER LUNCH, COL CALHEIROS TOOK
COL WILL TO THE REGIMENT OF PARACHUTISTS AREA IN HIS
PRIVATE CAR. UPON ARRIVAL COL CALHEIROS VERY PROUDLY
STATED, "WE HAVE NO LONG HAIR OR DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS
HERE". DURING THE MEETING IN COL CALHEIROS'S OFFICE A
GENERAL DISCUSSION WAS HELD WHICH LED TO THE DISCLOSURE
OF THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION: THE REGIMENT OF PARACHUTISTS AT
TANCOS IS A TRAINING/SCHOOL OPERATION ALTHOUGH IT ALSO FUNCTIONS
AS THE HOME OF THE PARACHUTISTS. THE REGIMENT RECEIVES 300 RE-
CRUITS EVERY 5 WEEKS FOR BASIC INDIVIDUAL TRAINING FOLLOWED BY
BASIC PARACHUTE TRAINING. THERE ARE 3 TO 4 CYCLES OF RECRUITS
IN TRAINING AT ANY GIVEN TIME. NO TACTICAL PARACHUTE UNIT IS
STATIONED AT TANCOS. A SUPPORT BATTALION (SCHOOL TROOPS) WHICH
FURNISHES INSTRUCTORS, PARACHUTE RIGGERS, AND OTHER CADRE IS ALSO
STATIONED AT TANCOS.

9. CURRENTLY, PARACHUTISTS ARE DISTRIBUTED AS FOLLOWS: 1 COMPANY IN TIMOR (THIS IS AN UNDER STRENGTH UNIT BECAUSE OF LOSSES SUSTAINED IN THE FIGHTING. IT STILL HAS 2 SERIOUSLY WOUNDED IN THE HOSPITAL IN AUSTRALIA); 1 BATTALION OF 6 COMPANIES IN ANGOLA (COL CALHEIROS STATED THAT HE EXPECTED WITHOUT A DOUBT THAT THE PARACHUTISTS WOULD BE THE LAST TO LEAVE ANGOLA SINCE THEY WERE THE LAST TO LEAVE GUINE AND MOZAMBIQUE); 1 BATTALION WITH AGRUPAMENTO MILITAR DE INTERVENCAO (AMI) IN THE LISBON AREA, CURRENTLY A BATTALION IS BEING FORMED AT AIR BASE #11, BEJA; ANOTHER AT AIR BASE #7 NEAR AVEIRO; THERE IS A LONG TERM PLAN FOR A BATTALION TO BE FORMED AT TANCOS WITH A NATO MISSION. IN A PREVIOUS CONVERSATION, COL CALHEIROS HAD INDICATED THE PLAN TO HAVE 1 BATTALION OF PARACHUTISTS IN EACH OF THE MILITARY REGIONS. THIS PLAN IS APPARENTLY BEING IMPLEMENTED.

10. USING THE INFORMATION PROVIDED BY AN ENGINEER OFFICER, SOON TO BE SENT TO THE US FOR TRAINING UNDER MAP, TO DESCRIBE SOME OF THE DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS WITH THE PORTUGUESE ARMED FORCES, COL WILL STATED THE FOLLOWING: I HAD BEEN TOLD THAT IN THE ENGINEER SCHOOL (LOCATED ADJACENT TO THE REGIMENT OF PARACHUTISTS) THERE IS A CLASS OF 800 RECRUITS. WHEN THE RECRUITS FIRST ARRIVED AND FOR THE FIRST 4 WEEKS THEY WERE AN EXTREMELY GOOD TRAINING CLASS, ABOUT THE 4TH OR 5TH WEEK THEY STARTED HOLDING MEETINGS AND DISCUSSIONS CONCERNING THE ATTEND-

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ANCE AT SOLDADOS UNIDOS VENCERAO (SUV) MEETINGS. HOW DOES THIS IMPACT ON THE PARACHUTISTS? COL CALHEIROS WAS VERY EMPHATIC IN DENYING ANY TYPE OF DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS WITHIN THE REGIMENT. IN RESPONSE TO A QUERY CONCERNING ATTEMPTS BY POLITICAL ACTIVISTS TO INFILTRATE HIS UNIT, HE RESPONDED THAT ATTEMPTS HAD BEEN MADE AND THAT THEY HAD UNCOVERED ABOUT ONE HALF DOZEN INFILTRATORS.

11. FOLLOWING THE DISCUSSION IN THE OFFICE, COL CALHEIROS TOOK HIS VISITORS ON A TOUR OF HIS INSTALLATION. WELL ORGANIZED RECRUIT TRAINING ACTIVITIES WERE IN PROGRESS. THE AREA WAS NEAT AND CLEAN AND CONSTRUCTION OF A GYMNASIUM AND TRAINING FACILITIES WERE TAKING PLACE (INDICATING THAT THE PARACHUTISTS ARE STILL RECEIVING FUNDS FOR MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENT). COL CALHEIROS WAS STRONG IN STATING THAT HE FULLY INTENDED TO KEEP HIS PARACHUTISTS WELL OCCUPIED IN TRAINING OR SPORTS IN ORDER TO PREVENT PROBLEMS OF INDISCIPLINE. COL CALHEIROS IS A MILITARY PROFESSIONAL WHO HAS A GREAT DEAL OF SYMPATHY FOR THE POOR PEOPLE IN THE REGION AROUND TANCOS. HE HAS A STRONG CIVIC ACTION PROGRAM, THE HIGHLIGHT OF WHICH WAS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A BEACH CAMP FOR LOCAL CHILDREN WHO WHILE LIVING ONLY 100 KILOMETERS FROM THE OCEAN HAD NEVER SEEN THE SEA. COL CALHEIROS HAD A COMMUNIST PARTY NEWSPAPER ON HIS OFFICE COFFEE TABLE.

12. COMMENT: THE TANCOS AREA LOCATED ON THE NORTH SIDE OF THE TAGUS RIVER ABOUT 20 KILOMETERS FROM ABRANTES CONTAINS 3 MAJOR PORTUGUESE MILITARY INSTALLATIONS: AIR BASE NO. 3, THE REGIMENT OF PARACHUTISTS, AND THE ENGINEER SCHOOL OF PRACTICE (WHICH PROVIDES BASIC TRAINING FOR ENLISTED PERSONNEL AS WELL AS TECHNICAL TRAINING COURSES AND INCLUDES THE OFFICER BASIC AND ADVANCED COURSES). IN RECENT PORTUGUESE HISTORY TANCOS HAS PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE ON 2 OCCASIONS; THE 11 MARCH 1975 ABORTIVE COUP WHEREIN SPINOLA DEPARTED BY HELICOPTER FOR SPAIN FROM TANCOS AND THE MEETING OF THE ARMED FORCES ASSEMBLY IN SEPTEMBER 1975 WHICH DEPOSED GEN VASCO GONCALVES.

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